

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 166232
ORIGIN EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CG-00 DOTE-00 MMO-01 DODE-00 OMB-01
SS-15 SP-02 PER-01 /033 R

DRAFTED BY EUR/NE:DWOOLFLEY:JG
APPROVED BY EUR:GSVEST
EUR:RDVINE

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P 300051Z JUN 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 166232

FOR AMBASSADOR FROM VEST

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: APER, AODE, UK

SUBJECT: LONDON MODE RECOMMENDATIONS (COAST GUARD)

REF: LONDON 15098, LONDON 18798

1. SEVERAL WEEKS AGO I APPOINTED A SPECIAL INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP TO REVIEW YOUR MODE RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE U.S. COAST GUARD HEADQUARTERS IN LONDON. I DID THIS IN RESPONSE TO YOUR SUGGESTION THAT FURTHER STUDY IN WASHINGTON WAS NEEDED TO DETERMINE THE APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF REDUCTION, WHICH YOU THOUGHT MIGHT RANGE BETWEEN A MINIMUM OF ONE ENLISTED PERSON ENGAGED IN ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT AND A TOTAL RELOCATION OF THE HEADQUARTERS TO THE UNITED STATES. THE WORKING GROUP INCLUDED REPRESENTATIVES OF STATE, DEFENSE, DOT AND OMB. I NOW HAVE THEIR FINDINGS IN HAND.

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2. AS YOU ARE AWARE, THE PRIMARY FUNCTION OF CGAE IS TO PROVIDE OVERSIGHT AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT TO THE NET OF LORAN-C NAVIGATIONAL STATIONS OPERATING IN THE ATLANTIC AND MEDITERRANEAN AREAS. THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE HAS

CONFIRMED THAT THESE FACILITIES ARE VITAL TO THE NATIONAL DEFENSE. AT THE REQUEST OF THE INTERAGENCY

WORKING GROUP THE COAST GUARD HAS CONDUCTED A THOROUGH STUDY OF THE FEASIBILITY OF CONDUCTING THE OVERSIGHT AND SUPPORT OF THESE ACTIVITIES FROM THE U.S., RATHER THAN LONDON. THEY HAVE MADE A CONVINCING CASE THAT OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY AND ECONOMIES JUSTIFY THE RETENTION OF THAT FUNCTION IN LONDON. HOWEVER, THE COAST GUARD STUDY CONCEDES THAT AN IMMEDIATE PERSONNEL REDUCTION ON THE ORDER OF FOUR OR FIVE AMERICANS CAN BE ACHIEVED THROUGH REPLACEMENT WITH UK NATIONALS OR A GREATER SHARING OF ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT WITH OTHER AGENCIES. PERHAPS OF MORE SIGNIFICANCE IN THE LONG RUN, THEY HAVE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT A FRESH LOOK SHOULD BE GIVEN TO THE PRACTICALITY OF GRADUALLY TURNING OVER THE OPERATION OF MORE LORAN-C STATIONS TO HOST NATIONS DURING THE INTERVAL BEFORE THE NAVSTAR SATELLITE NAVIGATIONAL SYSTEM RENDERS LORAN OBSOLETE. SUCH ACTION WOULD IN TURN ALLOW FURTHER PERSONNEL REDUCTION IN LONDON.

3. I AM SATISFIED THAT YOUR INITIATIVE IN THIS MATTER HAS PRODUCED A MUCH NEEDED AND THOROUGH REEXAMINATION OF PRESENT AND LONGER-TERM COAST GUARD STAFFING NEEDS IN LONDON, WHICH HAS BOTH DEFINED A BENCHMARK FOR REASONABLE RETRENCHMENT NOW AND SUPPLIED A PARAMETER FOR POSSIBLE AREA-WIDE REDUCTIONS OVER TIME. SUBJECT TO ANY FURTHER SUGGESTION YOU MIGHT HAVE, I AM INCLINED
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TO ACCEPT THE INTERAGENCY GROUP'S RECOMMENDATION THAT CGAE REMAIN IN LONDON FOR THE PRESENT. I WOULD ALSO ASK THAT THE EMBASSY EXAMINE WITH CGAE THE PRECISE MODALITIES FOR AN EARLY REDUCTION OF UP TO FIVE AMERICANS BY REPLACEMENT WITH LOCAL HIRE, BY CONSOLIDATION OF SOME ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT ACTIVITIES WITH OTHER AGENCIES, OR BOTH. HOWEVER, I CERTAINLY DO NOT INTEND THAT COAST GUARD REDUCTIONS BE ACHIEVED BY A CORRESPONDING INCREASE IN ADMINISTRATIVE STAFFING ELSEWHERE, OR BY OVERBURDENING PERSONNEL OF OTHER AGENCIES WHO ARE ALREADY FULLY UTILIZED.

4. I WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR THOUGHTS ON THE ABOVE WITHIN THE NEXT FEW DAYS, AS WE ARE ANXIOUS TO MOVE TO A DECISION. I WILL DISCUSS YOUR FAA RECOMMENDATIONS IN A SEPARATE MESSAGE. AGAIN, MY SINCERE THANKS FOR THE SINGULAR EFFORT YOU HAVE MADE TO IMPLEMENT THE PRESIDENT'S MODE POLICIES. VANCE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE166232
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: DWOOLFLEY:JG
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780269-1137
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t1978062/aaaaabpk.tel
Line Count: 112
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: ed0cee7f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 LONDON 15098, 78 LONDON 18798
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2207521
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LONDON MODE RECOMMENDATIONS (COAST GUARD)
TAGS: APER, AODE, UK
To: LONDON
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/ed0cee7f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014